

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SCCT-01 SAB-01 SAM-01 NIC-01 AID-05 OMB-01

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R 060844Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5854

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1468

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY, EG, XF

SUBJ: ISRAELI VIEW OF RIFT BETWEEN SADAT AND PLO

REF: BEIRUT 2677

1. IN CONVERSATION MARCH 4, DIRECTOR MFA NEAR EAST DIVISION
(VERED) GAVE US HER VIEWS ON RECENT RIFT BETWEEN SADAT AND PLO.

2. ACCORDING TO VERED, EPISODE IS RESULT OF SYRIAN ATTEMPT
TO THWART ANY DESIRE SADAT MAY HAVE TO CONCLUDE SEPARATE SECOND-
STAGE AGREEMENT. SHE BELIEVES THAT FEBRUARY 26 STATEMENT
BY PLO EX COMM (REFTEL), WHICH SPARKED AFFAIR, CAME ABOUT AT
INSISTENCE OF SAIQA MEMBERS OF EX COMM, VERED MAINTAINS
HOLD SWING VOTE WITHIN EX COMM AND WHO ACT ONLY ON INSTRUCTIONS
FROM SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. SHE REASONS THAT ASAD MUST HAVE KNOWN
STATEMENT WOULD PROVOKE STRONG REACTION FROM SADAT, BUT PROBABLY
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TOOK VIEW THAT THAT WAS PLO PROBLEM. MEANWHILE, PRUPOSE WAS

SERVED OF INCREASING PRESSURE ON SADAT NOT TO NEGLECT GOLAN AND WEST BANK DURING HIS SINAI NEGOTIATIONS.

3. VERED SAW SAME SYRIAN EFFORT TO BRING PRESSURE ON SADAT BEHIND VISIT TO DAMASCUS OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS OF JORDANIAN PM RIFAI. IN HER OPINION, WARMING TREND IN SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS WAS PREDICTABLE WITH EGYPT ABOUT TO EMBARK ON NEGOTIATIONS. SHE ADDED THAT ASAD MUST TAKE " PERVERSE DELIGHT" IN APPEARING TO BOTH PLO AND GOJ AS PROTECTOR OF THEIR WEST BANK ASPIRATIONS.

4. SPECULATING ON POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS ON SADAT'S FREEDOM OF ACTION, VERED SAID THAT ARAFAT NEEDS SADAT, BOTH IN ORDER TO KEEP PALESTINE ISSUE ALIVE AND TO PROTECT HIS OWN POSITION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT, MORE THAN SADAT NEEDS ARAFAT. (SHE CITED AS EVIDENCE THE PLO EFFORT TO UNDO DAMAGE OF FEBRUARY 26 EX COMM STATEMENT.) HUSSEIN IS IN SIMILAR POSITION VIS-A-VIS SADAT, WHOSE SUPPORT HE WILL NEED AT SOME POINT IN ORDER TO REENTER NEGOTIATING PICTURE. BOTH ARAFAT AND HUSSEIN THEREFORE AT TIME LIKE PRESENT SEEK SHELTER WITH ASAD, WHO HOLDS GREATER SWAY WITH SADAT BECAUSE OF HIS POTENTIAL ABILITY TO EMBROIL EGYPT IN RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, VERED BELIEVES, SADAT MUST DECIDE IF HE IS LEADER OF EGYPT OR OF ARAB WORLD; IF FORMER, HE WILL PURSUE EGYPTIAN INTERESTS, WHICH INCLUDE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, AND NOT BE SIDETRACKED BY OTHER ISSUES.

5. COMMENT: AS WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE (TEL AVIV 1370), ISRAELIS CONSIDER THAT THEIR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE WILL BE EASIER TO ATTAIN IF THERE ARE DEEP DIVISIONS BOTH BETWEEN ARAB STATES AND BETWEEN THESE STATES AND PLO. AWARE THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MINISTERS THAT THIS IS IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF ISRAELI POLICY CAN BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE (E.G. REACTION TO RABIN DEC. 4 HAARETZ INTERVIEW-CAIRO 9881), ISRAELI MINISTERS AND PRESS HAVE BEEN FAIRLY RESTRAINED IN COMMENTING ON RECENT EVIDENCE OF INTER-ARAB DIFFICULTIES. THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE, NEVERTHELESS, WIDELY DISCUSSED AND ISRAELIS UNDOUBTEDLY HOPE THEY REPRESENT A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT RE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDES IN FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS.

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